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ARGUMENT
ON THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Consulere patriæ; parcere afflictis; ferâ
Cœde abstinere; tempus atque iræ dare,
Orbi quietem, sæculo pacem suo,
Hæc summa virtus, petitur hâc cœlum viâ.

By DAVID HARTLEY, Esq.



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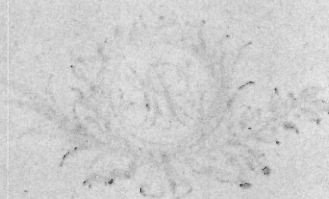
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1794.

ARGUMENT
ON THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Consider the people, the state of the
Government, the progress of the
Revolution, the progress of the
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ADVERTISEMENT.

BATH, DECEMBER, 1794.

THE following argument was originally written in the month of April last, as a declaratory Address to Parliamentary Electors, upon a Parliamentary vacancy then depending. It was not written with any view of publication. Fears and scruples, alarms and consternations, for the political tranquillity of this country, seemed at that time to have made a deep impression upon the public Mind. In such a state of jealous impression, every consideration of serious and scrupulous prudence seemed to recommend forbearance, even of verbal or argumentative contention, whilst the belligerent parties were mutually enraged to madness against each other, not only in words, but in the bloody strife of war, for death or victory. The fate of war itself has now interposed a solemn pause, for calm discussion of future measures.

Local and relative phrases being omitted; the substantive argument is now presented to the public, by a friend to peace, and to the rights of mankind.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ALBANY, DECEMBER, 1861.

THE following argument was originally written in the month of April 1861, as a declaration of sentiment in favor of the rights of the colored people, upon a Par-
tisan, and was published in the Albany Evening Journal, and is now reprinted, for the purpose of making it more generally known. It was not written with any view of publication, but it is now published, and is now published, for the purpose of making it more generally known. It was not written with any view of publication, but it is now published, and is now published, for the purpose of making it more generally known. It was not written with any view of publication, but it is now published, and is now published, for the purpose of making it more generally known.

Local and relative principles being omitted, the following argument is now presented in the form of a friend to peace, and to the rights of mankind.

ARGUMENT, &c.

IT is the object of this argument on the French Revolution, to discuss the causes and prospects of the civil wars commenced and impending, throughout the foreign and despotic governments of Europe ; together with the supposed policy or necessity of British interference in these wars ; and likewise to relieve the public mind, from fears or apprehensions which may have been suggested, of similar civil contentions in our own country. After two fruitless and unsuccessful campaigns, it was expected, that some negotiation for peace would have been admitted during the last session of Parliament. But every proposition to that effect was unfortunately rejected. If negotiation had been proffered by Parliament, early in the last spring, as the

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tribute of national humanity, before the die had been cast for thousands of lives, and an irretrievable campaign, it might have prevented inextricable evils in which this nation appears now to be involved. The apparent predilection of Parliament in the unconditional support of the war, has hitherto been the main finew of that war. Inasmuch therefore as the success of that war is now become a desponded cause, it follows, that it must be some fundamental change of parliamentary counsels alone, that can solve or sever the Gordian Knot.

There are but two alternatives ; war and negotiation. War has failed. Negotiation has never yet been put to the proof. Is it discussion of opinions that we fear ? and war the remedy ! That may be the suggestion of conscious guilt in despotic governments. But it would be the counsel of an ill-advising friend to the British constitution, which should in this country, dwell upon an argument of such suspicious complexion. The obvious imputation from such affectation of timidity, would be,

a charge of conscious deviations from the national interest, which the alarmists were anxious from unostensible motives to conceal. It may not proclaim to the ear, but it engraves this verdict upon the heart—

“Corruption mining all within,
Infects unseen.”

It aggravates what it would strive to conceal.

To give any semblance of reason to these unmeasured suggestions of alarm, according to strict law of argumentation, would require the implication, that the constitution of limited monarchy in Great Britain, is as intolerable in human society, as the late despotic government in France. For arguments which are equalized in their conclusion, pre-suppose an original equalization in their premises. But in the case before us, the conclusion is too absurd to be imputed. Yet although it is totally inconsequential, it has still produced political agitations in the public mind, which the independent civil contests of a foreign nation, would not have produced. All such alarms are groundlets under the British constitution. The period of our
political

political probation is past. The British nation is in the peaceful enjoyment of political and civil liberty, for which other nations are now contending.

It cannot be denied, that the most interesting principles of human Societies throughout the future world, are at stake upon the issue of the civil contest in France. But Reason is silenced in the fury and din of arms. The propitious moment of impression through the voice of Reason, is not to be found in war. Whenever the propitious moment of impression shall prevail, it must still be attended with mournful regret to the contending survivors, after thousands upon thousands of mankind, with all their strifes and animosities, their victories and defeats, are levelled in the dust. Thus far the slaughter of three campaigns has been perpetrated to no other effect, than to the aggravation of bloody contest. If a pacific pause of reflection may now be interposed, and out of precedent strifes, future peace, and elucidation in the moral and political constitution of human societies, may break forth amongst men; even the unhappy

happy lives which have hitherto been sacrificed, may not have fallen in vain.

On the part of despotism the contest is a lost cause. On the other hand; to the claimants of liberty, there is an immense and turbulent ocean to steer through, from unconditional despotism, to an unconditional and equalized republic of nations, without some provisional probation of time, to qualify intermediate functions and ranks, in novel temperaments of society. The political investiture of that liberty which is the universal right of man, is preferable even to the recipients, through interlocutory compromise and treaty, than through violent redress in blood.

In the great diversities of political constitutions, the principle has long been known in the world, that some constitutions are more conducive to the general happiness of mankind than others. The highest points of happiness and virtue attainable in human society, through the various modifications of political institutions, form the rights of man in social compact. Man-
kind

kind is now moved in mass on these claims, which are co-extensive with the foundations of human society. The nation of France has taken upon itself the unconditional experiment of these principles, in their utmost extent. Let Mankind then lay down their arms, and await the event, for instruction to themselves, without shedding blood.

I trust there can be no diversity of opinion, respecting the full and firm conviction, that the political constitution of Great Britain stands unrivalled, for the integrity of its principles, and for the unexampled blessing of universal liberty, which it equally dispenses to all ranks and conditions of men, and in the enjoyment of which, it equally protects every individual in these Kingdoms. Out of these premises, one firm and indubitable conclusion flows, to every participant of liberty under the British constitution, which is, the indispensable bond to maintain, and defend in all their integrity, the fundamental principles of that constitution, under which we enjoy, liberty, prosperity, and domestic peace.

All

All Eulogies upon the transcendent excellence of the British Constitution are superfluous. The proof of ages, and the testimony of surrounding nations, concur to affirm this irrefragable truth. The eyes of all Europe are now turned to the contemplation of the fatal reverse, in the convulsive destruction of the late despotic government of France, from the want of those inherent principles of self-preservation, to which no nation in the world can aspire, where the constitutional compact of society, is not founded on the principles of civil liberty and equal justice.

The mutuality of allegiance and protection forms the only basis of civil compact. Despotic authority disdaining the controul of social compact, leaves no protection or security to civil liberty, but in the destruction of despotism. This has been the fate of the despotic government of France. It would require a laborious volume to describe all the tyrannous despotism of that government. In epitome it cannot so justly and effectually be expressed,
as

as by saying, that the late government of France, contained not one of those salutary principles which form the basis of the British constitution, but that it enforced with tyrannic sway, every principle destructive of civil rights, and of equal justice. Thus arraigned before the tribunal of British rights and liberties, despotism stands convicted of tyrannous guilt, against the liberties, safety, and happiness of mankind.

That the principles of the late government of France, were inconsistent with the laws of God and the rights of man, has been equally acknowledged, by the Democrat, the Aristocrat, and the late unfortunate Monarch himself. Under the term of monarchy is included not only the prerogative persons of the Monarch, and of those of the royal blood, but in the next degree to them, an aristocratical and tyrannous nobility, supporting and supported by the throne ; and jointly forming a combined system of despotism, to the debasement and destruction of all other ranks in human society.

The instruments of this tyranny have
been—

An irresistible military standing force.

An absolute command of the public
purse by royal edict of taxation, requiring
not even the appearance of popular assent
beyond the insulting claim of compulsive
registration.

The unconditional patronage of all of-
fices of public trust, honour, or emolument,
military and civil, together with an un-
bounded list of secondary ministerial offices
of oppression.

The immense patronage of ecclesiastical
preferments, secular and regular.

Feudal superiorities, with monopolizing
and all-grasping entails, possessed by an
oppressive nobility, entrenched within their
own impregnable castles and forest laws;
and insolently exempt from the common
burdens of the state, in proportion to the

B

extent

extent of those feudal and territorial monopolies.

The multitudinous and inferior ranks of society torn from their families and the little comforts of their humble estate; devoted to the slaughter of war, to become the victims of the ambition, speculation, extravagance, pride, and cruelty of that nobility, who disdained to consider them as fellow-subjects, or even as fellow-creatures; while they were themselves monopolizing, in the monarch's court, all the rights of man, in the boundless expence of a civil list, more than adequate to the support of the national dignity, foreign and domestic.

All public roads infested with a *mare-chaussée* and barriers of inquisition, who passes—from whence—to what place—and for what reasons, public, private, or personal.

All correspondence of letters subject to the dominion of the posts.

All

All communication of thoughts by the press, whether philosophical, moral, civil, political, or religious, equally enthralled by public examination and conditional licence.

An inquisitorial police invading the secret recesses and domestic privacies of the most wretched and helpless indigents.

A monarchical distribution of pretended justice, under the hand of power, and through the instrumentality of dependent and venal judges, uncontrolled by the restrictive verdict of impartial juries.

A metropolis harrowed and subdued by the perpetual terrors and dungeons of a bastille, the horrid cemetery of the living; their only *Habeas Corpus*, either for life or death, being a *lettre de cachét*.

Revengeful and inhuman cruelties in criminal prosecutions by rack and torture—with ferocious public executions, more horrid even than any possible human crimes.

The French monarchy under the reign of despots has been the universal enemy of mankind, in whole centuries of foreign and desolating wars, excited by the ambition of conquest, for the purpose of ravaging the properties, and destroying the lives and liberties of mankind. Such has been hitherto the persevering system of the late government of France for some centuries past, and such have been the unexaggerated effects of it. This enormity of despotism, for 1400 years, has at length produced the total subversion of that intolerable constitution of tyranny, to which the principles of the American revolution (adopted for different and opposite views by the court, and by the nation of France), have marshalled the way. The Revolution of France is now become the most signal and important event in the history of mankind; and in its consequences will affect all future civil establishments among nations.

The nations of Europe who stand in immediate proximity to this event, are much

much more interested in the temperate, prudent, and peaceful conduct of this cause, than they can be in referring it to the furious and sanguinary tribunal of arms: because all civil and political principles of human society are founded upon the laws of God, and the rights of man; and therefore they ought to be decided by the temperate, reflected, and unimpassioned use of reason, as the vicegerent of God on earth, and the unerring guide to man.

It is from this source alone that we can expect any successful remedy to political or civil evils in human society. In ancient and barbarous ages of the world, the arbitrement of civil dissensions could only be referred to the fate of arms. The elucidations of reason, which we now possess, had not at those remote periods enlightened the mind, or animated the heart of man. To superinduce a confederate army of all European powers upon the domestic civil war in France, is to aggravate madness ten thousand fold. Despotism itself

is

is madness; and war is the paroxysm of madness. The decision of war must follow the strongest force. A British parliament can have no title to commit to the chance of arms the possible re-establishment of despotism in France. It was by revolutionary resistance to arbitrary power in the last century that we have repelled despotism from our own country, and I trust that we ever shall maintain and vindicate the revolutionary franchise of liberty and rights against all claims of despotism. It is reason that is now the guide of life. Tyranny is appalled, and man is free. It is our own nation which has, by magnanimous example, opened the gates of liberty to mankind; not by slaughter, but by enlightened reason.

As Britons, the clearest line of conduct is marked out for us, which is, not to wage confederate war upon the French nation, for the imposition of any government upon them, inferior in liberty to the freedom of our own constitution. *Quod tibi fieri non vis,*

vis, alteri ne feceris. Our confederates wage unconditional war, which, with victory, becomes despotism.

The disavowal on the part of the confederate powers of the Prince of Saxe Cobourg's manifesto of 5th April, 1793, in favour of the French constitution of the years 1789, 90, and 91, and his compelled revocation of that manifesto four days after, (viz. on 9th of April); in consequence of that disavowal, form a complete proof, that our confederates at least wage war for unconditional conquest. But that which is unconditional on the part of the allies, is not unconditional on the part of the French nation, if that nation declare the specific grounds of their cause; which is the actual case. A specific declaration of rights has been adopted by the Convention of France, as the ground-work of their whole cause. Therefore in that point of view, the war upon the part of the confederates, since that declaration, is become specific against the *terms* and *principles*

ciples of that declaration of rights, and requires to be justified upon that ground.

The principles of the British constitution undoubtedly approach the nearest towards perfection of any political constitution hitherto known in the world. I shall therefore take the principles of that constitution as the line of British conduct. The French declaration of rights to which I allude, was accepted in the Convention on the 23d day of June, 1793. If it contains any vicious principles abhorrent to social morality or peace, they should be specifically pointed out, in justification of the junction of Great Britain with our unconditional confederates. Our allies appear more consistent with their own principles than we do, whose unrivalled pride has ever been, the vindication, by arms, of our own Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights.

It

It is agreed on all hands that one nation has not a right to impose any specific form of government upon another. The vindication of the moral laws and principles of society is the utmost bound of interference. The French declaration of rights, of June 1793, not only contains no principles which even despots could accuse as being abhorrent to social morality, but, on the contrary, it is conformable in all its principles to the British Constitution of liberty and rights. It is similar in principles to the declarations of Anglo-American rights during the late American war; and the principal difference from the antecedent French declaration of rights, in 1791, consists in the application to a republican form of government, established subsequent to the constitution in 1791, in a similar manner, as the declaration in America, was accommodated in its forms and institutions, to the Confederate Republic in America.

The destruction of the most absolute despotism that ever prevailed in the world,
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cannot, in the contemplation of the British nation, be considered as a criminal or pernicious example, contrary to the laws of social morality. By joining in an unconditional confederate war against the French, the powers so allied render it impossible for that nation to establish a quiescent government of liberty and moral rights. The ferocity of the attack, which is general and unconditional to their destruction, drives them to the most violent extremes. The numberless public executions which have taken place in France, have fallen upon such persons as have been suspected of correspondence with the confederate powers. It is that confederacy which converts diversity of political opinions into suspicion of treachery and condemnation to death. If the confederates do entertain private correspondencies in France for the restoration of the old and abhorred despotism, it is to that cause that the institution of the revolutionary tribunal must be imputed.

The old government was destroyed from its foundations, and another government of
limited

limited monarchy was formed and established in its place, during a course of sharp controversy for three years, 1789, 1790, 1791, with the most explicit dissensions of opinion, but without the sacrifice of a single life by a systematical revolutionary tribunal. The distinction is very plain. In civil contests, every member of the community is entitled to his free opinion, until the majority of the nation have delivered their sentiments and decided the cause. From that period, the dissentient minority are bound to the constitution established by common consultation, and decided by a full majority of the nation. Suppose a majority of ten to one, or of twenty to one, Why are not the tenth or the twentieth men put to death? The reason is plain; because a large majority, confiding in their numbers and power, feel no anxiety, and apprehend no danger to their new constitution, from a small minority of one to ten, or of one to twenty; and because the legitimacy, as well as the permanence and security of every government, depends upon the de-

cided majority of assents within the community in question. But if a minority of tenth men, or of twentieth men, apply to a confederacy of all Europe to subvert that constitution, and to effect the destruction of their country, neither public law nor private forbearance will rescue them from vengeance. Revolutionary law, like martial law, pleads the urgency of danger, and the delay of scrupulous inquiry; and therefore substitutes suspicion or circumstantial presumption, in the place of strict and legal proof. Civil war is a fearful state. Fear aggravates suspicion, and takes the shortest way to save itself. Of all the horrors of civil war affecting social life, this is the bitterest evil.

The confederacy of despotic princes has been the urging cause of every death by revolutionary tribunal; from the unhappy fate of the late unfortunate King to that of the lowest agent in the cause of despotism. Every accumulated death confirms and aggravates the cruelty of exposing such sacrifices to the fury of a nation enraged

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against despotism. Unconditional war is despotism. Whatever diversities of opinion there may be in France upon subordinate modifications of government, this is certain, at least, that the whole nation abhors despotism. It follows, therefore, that every agent or correspondent tampered with, or employed in the cause of unconditional war, is sacrificed to inevitable destruction.

It is from the consideration of all these horrors of war, and their immeasurable aggravations, that I cannot possibly concur in counsels of blood. The contest before us is not a case of war; it is a case of reason and argument, similar to the reformation of religious protestantism two centuries ago. This is the case of political protestantism, to repel the cruelties of despotism, as the religious reformation was to repel the abominations of popery. Force is the *ratio ultima* of tyrants. The moral and social compact of peace and happiness is the *ratio ultima* of man. Force is no arbitrement of justice against
injustice.

injustice. It has throughout all ages been the support of tyranny, until moral politicians, under the banner of reason, stepped forth, and promulgated the doctrines of social compact. Those doctrines have profelyted all mankind. God inspired reason into man as the breath of life. If a nation is attacked by brute force, in its territory, or persons or property, there is no redress but self defence, in force ; but if a question of policy arises respecting the happiness of mankind, such question is within the dominion of reason, and foreign to force. Shall one man command the lives and fortunes of an whole community?—If this question be referred to the bloody arbitrement of war, let the cause fall which way it will, mankind gains no certain or rational arbitrement against future questions of similar contention. The only thing certain, is the destruction of thousands and millions of human lives.

Here then let us arrest this question, to save the blood of future millions. A nation
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tion (France) fell into civil contests, a few years ago, respecting some proposed re-formations of their political constitution. In the period of three years, from 1789 to 1791, the reformatiions were compleated, and the constitution renovated upon principles of reason and investigation, with the assent of the then King and People of France. From a despotic it became a limited monarchy; all the intolerable grievances of despotism being expelled, and the new government reformed, as nearly as the case would admit, upon principles similar to the limited monarchy of Great Britain.

It does not appear that surrounding nations thought very deeply of the resulting and influential example of despotism reformed within the bounds of reason and British liberties. The sovereigns of Europe, blinded with fastidious despotism, seemed to despise the influence of reason as unworthy of their regard. But when the systematic perseverance of three years had brought the great work into a practicable shape, they began to fear the influential
example

example of reformed despotism, and from that period confederacies of European powers were formed for the destruction of the new constitution of France, and for the partition of its territory. The dates of these conventions and treaties were long before any hostile preparations on the part of France. The treaty of Pavia was on the 6th of July, 1791; the convention of Pilnitz on the 26th of August, 1791; and various other preparatory treaties, on the part of the sovereigns of Europe, were formed in the course of the year 1791. Of all these matters, explanations were demanded on the part of France, and refused by the combined powers; and, (according to the customs of nations), France declared war upon the refusal of various necessary explanations—such as, the cause of armaments by the combined powers, the coalition with the French emigrants, supplying them with arms, &c. &c.

All these points are now become facts of notoriety.

The French did not declare war with the Emperor until the month of April, 1792; which was many months subsequent to various treaties and confederacies entered into against France by the Emperor, and most of the European powers. The forbearance on the part of France, considering the notoriety of various treaties against themselves, with the public and avowed support, enrollment, and arming of the emigrants, was very much within the ordinary forbearance of independent states, and in no degree to compare, for peremptory promptitude of defiance, to the proceedings of the British Ministry, in the year 1756, in taking 25,000 seamen from the French, before the declaration of war. In the dubious state of alarm in which the National Assembly found themselves involved, in the beginning of the year 1792, it was undoubtedly not their interest to provoke hostilities with all surrounding nations. They were fully apprized of the hostile disposition of the European powers to their new constitution, and still more apprehen-

five of the insincerity of the French Court itself, against the reformed constitution, although it had been accepted by the King, with the fullest professions of choice and complacence. The great object of jealousy, at that time, was the Austrian Committee, so called; of the existence of which, the proofs or presumptions are not within our view, any farther than as they may argue, that the French were urged into the war, by confederacy of councils, as well as preparations of arms against them.

I dwell upon the indisposition of the French to be involved in universal war, because it was so much their interest to have avoided it, in the beginning, and still more remains their interest now, to be extricated from war. From thence I draw this inference, that the French will be disposed, at any moment, to concur in the abatement of the war, on the condition of being left unmolested by other nations, respecting their new constitution; and, on their parts, leaving all other nations unmolested in

in all their dominions and forms of government, and all other interests whatsoever.

A very notorious proof occurred in the commencement of the revolution, to shew, that the new government of France neither had, nor could have, any interest in disturbing the governments of other countries, not even in a case where an obvious fraternity of cause seemed to call upon them. The States of Brabant, by their Plenipotentiary, M. Vandernoot, presented a letter of requisition to the Assembly and the King, requesting the interposition of the power of France, in support of their recent claims of emancipation from the dominion of the Emperor, their sovereign. But the National Assembly totally refused all aid and interference ; they persisted, through the course of an whole twelvemonth, to remain tranquil and passive bye-standers, whilst the Imperial power pursued and effected the compleat re-conquest of the Austrian Flanders, by force of arms. This refusal to interfere in any civil contest foreign to them, continued through the whole of

the year 1790; but after the year 1791, when the Emperor Leopold began to negotiate a general confederacy of the powers of Europe against the new constitution of France, the National Assembly took up, with rage, the cause of Belgic liberty, as an act of hostility to that prince, who had put himself at the head of the grand confederacy of sovereigns, against the liberation of the commons of France. This act was therefore an act of defensive hostility, after a previous declaration of war against the Emperor.

Similar conduct stands in frequent example among nations. Henry IVth of France, and queen Elizabeth of England, did both support the original revolt of the Belgic provinces against Philip II of Spain. Charles Ist of England supported the protestant insurgents at Rochelle, against the tyranny of the crown of France, during the administration of Cardinal Richlieu: but the power of Richlieu prevailed, and the French nation has groaned under the cruelties of despotism, from that

that fatal day, until the present revolution of liberty and rights. Louis XIVth, and Louis XVth, supported various rebellions against the decided constitutions of these kingdoms. Louis XVIth, supported the American cause against the claims of taxation and legislation, on the part of Great Britain.

There is no device of war more studied, or more frequently put into practice, than exciting civil tumults in an enemy's country. If the French Convention had confined their decrees of revolutionary fraternization, specifically to nations with whom they were actually at war, or under such violent presumption of meditated injury, as would have justified a declaration, or an act of war, (according to the laws of nations) no exception could have been taken to their conduct. But their declarations were general and unqualified, and therefore gave general and justifiable offence. When the ministry of Great Britain remonstrated against the unqualified generality of fraternizing decrees, the French ministry gave an explanation,

nation, which although it might not be considered as the obvious construction upon the decree of November 19, 1792, was, however a proffered explanation, and therefore might have been accepted as the *amende honorable*, reducing the principle of revolutionary fraternization to the qualified case, towards nations in hostility. It was a most unfortunate measure, infinitely to be lamented, that the qualifying explanation was not accepted. If it had been accepted, all the miseries of war might have been saved, and we might have been at peace now. No nation is to be presumed, from a lapse of phrase, subsequently retracted, to remain in the persevering intention of doing any act, not only contrary to their retraction, but most of all, contrary to their interest.

The French nation have given a full proof in the case of the Belgian revolution, that they are not ready to declare themselves the universal champions of revolutionary liberty, throughout the world. There was great prudence of conduct in that restraint. Neither has that prudence
deserted

deserted them at this hour. In their new constitution of June, 1793, they have inserted as a fundamental and declaratory principle, the political independence of nations. They say, "they will not interfere
 " in the government of other nations, they
 " will not suffer other nations to interfere
 " with the government of their own."
 (Article 119 of the *acte constitutionnel* of the French Republic, 1793.) I am anxious to explain this point: because it appears to me to have been the only embarrassment to the negociation of peace. The article preceding that above-mentioned, (viz. article 118) is very significant on this head of clearing the way to negociation of peace: viz. article 118, "The French people are the
 " friend and natural ally of *free people*." The peculiar view of this article is to express, that fraternization does not commence except with nations, either in possession, or in the active vindication of civil freedom, by the universal and unequivocal exertion of the national will: thereby signifying that they do not offer their fraternization

nization to urge nations to the overthrow of any governments existing in tranquility, for the purpose, even of political emancipation, by the excitement of a civil war. They have felt the offence which a lapse of precision in phrase has excited against them; and therefore they pursue the recovery of that lapse, by the peace-offering to all foreign nations, contained in these two articles.

It is not possible that the French nation can have any other view than peace, and the possession of their new constitution. The substance of this article 118, is precisely the construction, which M. Chauvelin offered to the British ministry, in abatement of the offence which had been taken with the unqualified fraternizing decree of November, 1792. If the confederate nations have any real desire for peace, consistent with security to themselves, the purport of these overtures is most evidently calculated to give them full satisfaction. They are a peace-offering, to those who are willing to understand.

We

We are surrounded in a world of consternation. Novel principles of society have now taken possession of the minds of men throughout the world. The science of politics is no longer limited merely to the arrangement of a balance of powers between the various members of any community, as in a state of contentious society: the doctrine of free compact, founded on the Rights of Man, is now claimed by mankind in a mass, as their indefeasible right. Twenty-five millions of men have thrown down the gauntlet in that cause. By this principle the rights in society are now to be decided; the challenge is loudly proclaimed, and will not brook evasion or delay. I suspect the compulsive application of this principle is nearer to all despotic governments than is generally apprehended. We cannot but recognize a principle capable of that application, in recent events, which have already decided in one moment of time the total fate of the French Revolution. A London Gazette, reciting the tumults of October 5 and 6, 1789, states, that "the word to

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" fire

“ fire was no sooner given, than the *Regiment de Flandre* clubbed their arms to a man, and other regiments also laid down “ their arms.” An important secret is here developed; which is, that the multitudinous and inferior ranks of men, who stand in rank and file, have a decisive negative in all civil contests, by clubbing their arms to a man. The contest in France has been a civil war between two classes of men; the one class consisting of twenty-four millions, the other class of one million. The high, few; the many, low. From the highest pinnacle to the lowest abyss! A horrid chasm between! In this tremendous chasm has the despotism of France been ingulphed.—A sermon of deep instruction to mankind!

There is another royal document that generalizes the foregoing. It bears the title of “Reasons that his Prussian Majesty opposes to the general armament of the inhabitants of the Empire of Germany,” viz. (after some previous, but not unimportant matter)

“ That

“ That it is infinitely dangerous at a
 “ time like the present, when the French
 “ are watching every advantage to insinu-
 “ ate their principles, to assemble such a
 “ mass of men, whose ideas upon forms
 “ of government must be various, and
 “ amongst whom, consequently, dissenti-
 “ ons might arise, disastrous in their con-
 “ sequences both to the armies and to the
 “ constitution of the empire.”

This declaration baffles all comment, and defies all aggravation. The whole Empire of Germany is declared to be on the tiptoe of insurrection, congenial in sentiment, and premeditating in their hearts to follow the example of France. All the expecting millions of the German Empire are thus superadded to the actual millions of Revolutionists in France: And if these are truths respecting the nations of Germany and France, it follows, by inevitable consequence, that all other millions throughout *despotic* nations of Europe are in a state of preparation and promptitude to receive those principles of resistance to despotism,

despotism, which the French are watching every advantage to insinuate. The arguments in this manifesto have no bounds; they generalize the principles of the French Revolution, to the predestinated destruction of every *despotic* government throughout the world.

The antecedent part of this manifesto declares, that the French nation is invincible; and that the German peasantry have not the power (even if they had the will) to oppose them: That there is no sufficiency of arms to arm the peasants, nor any possibility of training them to military discipline, adequate to contend with the discipline of the French nation. If this manifesto had issued under the sign and seal of the French Convention, they could not have added one iota to their cause. If it had been concerted at Frankfort, between the Deputies of the French Convention and the Prussian ministers, it might have paved the way, by an abdication of the cause, on the part of the King of Prussia, to a pacific Congress, to abate the war,
and

and to stop the farther effusion of human blood.

The following is a copy of the manifesto, according to the order of the articles which, in the course of my argument, I have inverted.

“ March 1794. The reasons which his
“ Prussian Majesty opposes to the general
“ armament of the inhabitants of the Em-
“ pire are the following:

“ 1st. By employing the peasants against
“ the enemy, agriculture will want hands.

“ 2^{dly}. There are not arms sufficient to
“ give to such a number of people.

“ 3^{dly}. It is impossible in so short a time
“ to teach the manual exercise to the in-
“ habitants.

“ 4^{thly}. It has been found by the expe-
“ rience of the two last campaigns that the
“ soldiers opposed to the French must be
“ perfectly exercised, to make head against
“ them.

“ 5^{thly and lastly}. Independent of the
“ above reasons, it is infinitely dangerous
“ at a time like the present, when the
“ French

“ French are watching every advantage to
 “ insinuate their principles, to assemble
 “ such a mass of men, whose ideas upon
 “ forms of government must be various,
 “ and amongst whom, consequently, dis-
 “ sentions might arise, disastrous in their
 “ consequences both to the armies and to
 “ the constitution of the empire.”

Whatever may have been the recondite
 motives which may have given rise and
 publication to the foregoing manifesto, the
 arguments are conclusive, as to the impos-
 sibility of conquering France by force of
 arms, and of imposing any compulsive
 constitution upon them. And, moreover,
 the principle of interfering in the consti-
 tution of any other country is totally re-
 nounced by British declarations; although
 the British power is combined with allies,
 whose only professed object is to destroy
 every principle which can lay a restraint
 upon despotism. The allies pursue with
 fire and sword the abettors of every such
 principle, whether it appears in the Repub-
 lican shape, or even in the more moderate
 system

system of limited Monarchy, similar to that of Great-Britain. Both a Republic and a limited Monarchy are inimical to the system of despotism which they have so long maintained.

To my own country, my argument not to interfere any farther in the war, is not only because we have no right to interfere with another nation, but because the example of reformed despotism cannot excite any similar alarm in our own country, in which no man can possibly conceive that there is one speck of despotism. This country is not divided into two ranks of men, in the proportion of twenty vassals to one tyrant. There is not one vassal, nor one tyrant, nor one feudal territorial tyranny. The proprietors of the land and their tenants are connected by common interest and equality of compact. All personal rights and liberties are as free and unconfined as "the casing air." All ranks of men in this country are so implicated and involved together, that no one class can be proscribed by any other class,

class, without such convulsions in the general interests of the whole community, as would overawe private contentions, and protect the publick peace of the state. There is one uninterrupted sympathy—one participation of interests, in gradation, under the laws of equal liberty and rights, from the highest member of the community to the lowest.

The political constitution of the state is founded upon indefeasible principles of wisdom and justice, conformable to all the personal and social rights of man. The cardinal points of the British Constitution are, National Representation—The Commons giving and granting their own Money.—Trial by Juries—The Habeas Corpus—The Freedom of the Press—And above all, the existence of an inherent right and inherent means, within the peaceful precincts of the Constitution, to revise and correct any subordinate errors, which in the lapse of time may have invaded and deteriorated any separate branch of the political constitution or civil rights. No example, therefore,

fore, of despotism, arraigned, convicted, and reformed, can operate in the British Constitution, as an object either of terror, or of conscious guilt. "It touches not us. We go free."

To foreign sovereignties I would represent the progressive advancement of British freedom, as a decisive example—an argument of warning to them. The aboriginal principle of the political and civil liberties of the British constitution, derived to us even so far back as from our Saxon ancestors, has lain like the good seed in the ground. It has struggled against tares, and weeds, and malignant plants, in the first chaos of society: It has in its growth aspired to the celestial element of freedom, having overawed and subdued all the cankered roots of despotism.

I would not plead the cause even of my beloved country with assuming arrogance: nevertheless, the superb example will stand forth to all the nations of the world, and say, Thus far may you go, in obedience to

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the Laws of God, and in vindication of the Rights of Man—thus far may you go, at least, in liberty, prosperity, safety, and peace.—The days of despotism are numbered—“ Fate comes at the last, and with “ a little pin bores through its castle “ walls.”

The flood-tide of liberty is set in. Concede, whilst you may, to those whom you call your people. It will prolong the term even of your temporal power, when it shall become a beneficent power to man. Give to man the perfect freedom of his bodily labour and exertions. Take him into participation of God's soil, that he may increase and multiply, and fertilize the earth. Give to man the free expansion of his mental faculties, unawed by force, undaunted by fear. Man can possess no more. God in his creation gave no more to man. All the rest is extraneous, the mere fringe and trappings of society. Urge not mankind to the wreck of vengeance upon despotism. That there exists in the world a counteracting vengeance to despotism

tism is true. But vengeance is only operative against the refractory and obdurate despot. The despot who concedes to the claims of justice and reason, when called upon by the voice of God, from that hour stands unappalled: *Rectus in curia*. Concession absolves. The despot is no longer such. Despotism is not a personal vice, but the error of ages in the constitution of human societies. That good may proceed out of evil, by the counteraction of one vice to another, is undoubtedly true, because "there is a providence that shapes our ends;" but it is not of necessary consequence that future good can only arise out of intermediate evil. Concede, therefore, without regret or delay; even now, before the hour of concession shall be past. Time was—Time is—Await not the fatal sentence—Time is past!

Let the Decree of all nations in this war be—

To abate the war. To enter into negotiation of peace, upon the ground of article 119 of the *Acte Constitutionel* of France
of

of June 1793, viz. "That none of the contracting parties shall interfere in the government of any other nation, nor suffer the interference of any other nation in their own." The pledge of France is already given in their constitutional act of government. All other sovereignties will of course be competent to conclude, sign, and ratify, any such treaty, not only in this fundamental article, but likewise in all the subordinate articles, of political or commercial negotiation. The combined treaty, and each separate treaty, when concluded and ratified on the part of the respective confederate Powers, shall be referred to the primary assemblies of France for national ratification. The universal ratification of twenty-five millions of people, in the mass, would afford stability and confidence among nations, beyond the example of any former age.

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These are my most serious and anxious thoughts on the deepest interests of human society. The lives of millions are at stake. To exasperate man against man, and nation against nation, in an universal civil war of all mankind, is endless horror. Peace is safety. The sentiments of peace are the only counsels in which I can partake. I cannot give counsel in blood. *Nolo interesse sanguini.*

CONCLUSION.

Bath, Dec. 22d, 1794.

THESE are the arguments which I had stated at the opening of the last campaign. The events of that campaign have but too sufficiently verified the premises there stated, and the only conclusion which can be drawn from thence, is, that no other measures can restore mankind to consolation and safety, but the re-establishment of speedy and permanent peace. The universal voice of Europe now deprecates any

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further

farther prosecution of war, and zealously invokes the return of peace.

But what do we understand by peace? Is it only peace between France and other European powers, leaving the civil war in France to rage in its utmost fury? Such a system would prove equally insecure to all parties. The French would consider such policy on the part of the European powers, in no other light than as secret hostility against themselves, lying in wait for opportunities of advantage to renew the war. They are well instructed in the mode of retaliation which is most dreaded by the established governments on the continent of Europe. The suspicion of treacherous policy, under a fallacious pretext of peace, would drive them to lurking counteractions of hostility, by disseminating the principles of the French Revolution amongst the despotic governments of Europe.

I shall not declare myself either an advocate or a tolerant of despotism; but I could

could join issue, both in policy and principle, upon this point, to stipulate with the French nation for the abatement of all political invasion against the established governments of Europe, as the conditional guarantee for the peaceful possession of their new constitution. If I were to give counsel to despotism, it should be to accept this compromise, and to take heed to its own ways. The despotic principle is attainted throughout the world; active intolerance against the liberties and rights of mankind will but anticipate its doom.

To this reasoning the conscious terrors of despotism superadd their testimony; and if this conclusion be firm, that the quiescence of established governments is inseparably connected with the civil peace of France, it would become the common cause of Europe, not only to abate the war, but to effect the re-establishment of domestic peace in France, against all assaults and obstacles, which implacable resentments and the continuance of civil strife might oppose to its restoration. Con-

fiscation of civil property is the inextinguishable firebrand of civil war. There is the desperate rub. On the other hand, compulsive restitution of purchases and acquisitions established during a civil war, would raise up a new host of insurgents in civil commotion.

This is the dilemma of alternate evils, equally deprecated by all the principles of civil policy, or moral charity. Conciliation alone can extricate this dilemma. It is not the mere sudden cessation of slaughter that will give mental peace. Without the peace of the heart, there can be no civil peace in France:—and, by the premises, if not in France, eventually not in Europe.

I tread upon jealous ground. I cannot be misunderstood to refer to an unhappy race of men, expatriated from their native soil, victims of civil discord, predestined to their wretched fates by descent of birth, not by personal usurpations. I shall neither impute crimes, nor discuss proportions
of

of crimes, in civil war; but thus far it is no more than justice to these unhappy men, to state on their parts, that they can derive no crime from the predestined lot of their birth. If an interchange of original lot in birth and civil station could only have suggested, upon equality of argument, the presumptive interchange of alternate crimes and accusations, who shall throw the first stone, or who shall refuse oblivion of mutual offences?

I shall not discuss the political expedience, in society, of the late feudal and monarchical nobility in France. That question would even now be invidious; certainly unnecessary; and, moreover, it is foreclosed. The complainants have their redress. There is now no vestige left, but in the cœnotaphs of misery; yet these men are of the same blood as their antagonist victors. The heart of the French nation is rent in twain. It is these wretched confiscations which have affixed the irremissible doom. Neither will the victors themselves enjoy cordial peace and tranquillity
with

with divided hearts in one nation, if they should inflexibly persevere in these unrelenting confiscations.

The Irish nation has been in times past, and for a century of years, a miserable example of the unrelenting lot of confiscations. They have been reduced to the very verge of national annihilation, thro' a century in succession, of promiscuous and indiscriminate civil confiscations. The French nation has had this grievous example before their eyes, during a century of their alliance with the expatriated refugees of Ireland. They may now profit by the contemplation of this example, to avert similar evils from their own nation, and to superadd virtue to their cause, by the conciliatory abatement of unrelenting confiscations.

I can adduce a case in point, of diplomatic adoption of the moral principles of conciliation, for which I now plead. It is from a late treaty with the United States of America. By the 5th article of the Definitive

finitive Treaty of Peace, signed at Paris on
 the 3d of September 1783, between Great-
 Britain and the United States of America,
 it is stipulated between the contracting
 parties, " that all persons of whatsoever
 " description" (not even excepting those
 who had carried arms against their country)
 " shall have free liberty to go to any part
 " or parts of any of the Thirteen United
 " States, and therein to remain twelve
 " months, unmolested in their endeavours
 " to obtain the restitution of such of their
 " estates, rights, and properties, as may
 " have been confiscated. And that Con-
 " gress shall also earnestly recommend to
 " the several States a reconsideration and
 " revision of all acts or laws regarding
 " the premises, so as to render the said
 " laws or acts perfectly consistent, not only
 " with justice and equity, but with that
 " spirit of conciliation, which, on the re-
 " turn of the blessings of peace, should
 " universally prevail. And that Congress
 " shall also earnestly recommend to the
 " several States, that the estates, rights,
 " and properties of such last-mentioned
 " persons

“ persons shall be restored to them, they re-
 “ funding, to any persons who may be in
 “ possession, the *bonâ fide* price (where any
 “ has been given) which such persons may
 “ have paid on purchasing any of the said
 “ lands or properties, since the confiscation.

“ And it is agreed that all persons who
 “ have any interest in confiscated lands,
 “ either by debts, marriage-settlements, or
 “ otherwise, shall meet with no lawful
 “ impediment in the prosecution of their
 “ just rights.”

I will not risque the disparagement of
 this splendid code of moral diplomatics, by
 any attempt of feeble panegyrick upon this
 formal recognition of mental peace. It is
 the silent and pervading action of reason,
 which has at length effected its practicable
 impressure upon the heart of man; not
 through the cannon's mouth, but through
 the breath of peace. Divine philanthropy has
 drawn her line of circumvallation around
 the fortress of barbarism. Its proud and
 obdurate battlements are fallen to the
 ground, and crumbled into dust.

It is mental peace alone that can administer either palliation or remedy to the heartfelt miseries and pangs of civil war. Civil wars are the vultures of the mind: man to man, enraged with personal injury, and brooding upon mental revenge. *Mens est quæ diros sentiat ictus.* In foreign wars no man knows his enemy. No man has his personal enemy, or feels or resents personal injury. Foreign wars proceed not from mental cause, but from some avarice of vile trash, or some visionary pride of dominion, in which the combatants have no interest or motive to resentment. Mental war and mental peace are not mere ethical speculations: they are the realities and distinct characteristics of civil war, and of its abatement. The whole argument, therefore, binds up to this conclusion, that there can be no assuaging balm to civil war, without the cordial restoration of mental peace.

It is needless to enlarge upon any explanatory application of the above-recited article of the American treaty. The terms

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upon which this article is constructed, are equally capable of comparative application to any other nation. The diplomatic authority of this act holds forth the universal doctrine to mankind, in all political vicissitudes of society, to sustain the conciliatory principle of civil restoration, whenever the dissentient minority in any civil war, abandoning hostilities, shall proffer cordial and conciliatory return into the bosom of their country. The magnanimous re-adoption, by the victors, of their fellow citizens conforming to the new constitution, will add strength to that constitution, by converting enemies into friends.

The deepest attractions of the heart are of indelible impression. They are inalienable from the charities and consanguinities of the parental soil. Expulsion and confiscation are the intolerable tortures of the mind. They may drive the unhappy sufferers to extremities of despondent rage and madness, but never to cold indifference or unregretting oblivion. The expatriated victims, forlorn and wandering in the
aphelion

aphelion of the social orb, are still biaſſed, even thro' their deſolated courſe of darkneſs and exile, by their primæval attractions.

The firſt ſtep towards remedy is to know the conſtitution of the afflicting evil. The afflicting evils of civil war are conſiſcation and exile; death being the penalty annexed to conſiſcation; of which exile is only the lingering and miſerable evaſion. Theſe evils are appropriate to civil war. Whatever may be the termination of any war between two foreign nations, no exile can take place between nations who have never partaken of the ſame ſoil. As to conſiſcation, the conqueſt of a province by any one nation from another in war, is ſtill not conſiſcation. Conſiſcation is a perſonal penalty, not a national one. In the late conqueſt of Canada from France by Great-Britain, perſonal and municipal rights and properties were reſerved to the reſpective proprietors, in the province ſo conquered. In the caſe of Alſace and Lorrain, ceded to France ſome years ago, all perſonal properties, and all municipal
and

and feudal properties and rights, were reserved to the respective proprietors, by the treaty cession. These, and such similar cases, are transitions of dominion, without the least shadow of resemblance to confiscation.

In foreign wars taxation forms the pecuniary fund for the support of the war. Confiscation is the pecuniary fund and weapon of civil war. Exile is civil death. Therefore exile and confiscation are the afflicting evils; the alpha and omega of civil war.

As to the remedy, the text before us marshals the way: "To recommend a
 " revision of all acts or laws regarding the
 " premises, (confiscation and exile) so as to
 " render the said laws or acts perfectly consistent, not only with justice and equity,
 " but with that spirit of conciliation,
 " which, on the return of the blessings of
 " peace, should universally prevail."

No precise line can be drawn in the application of this doctrine. In its foundation

tion it is the general cause of philanthropy, addressed to the moral feelings of the heart. To willing minds expedients will never be wanting. Redemption by repayment of *bonâ fide* price;—the restoration of family settlements, and collateral interests in confiscated lands;—together with other expedients, which the respective claimants will be industrious to suggest, may afford large and liberal means of consolation and redress.

There is a fund of great publick notoriety, from which conciliatory means of restitution may possibly be supplied to large extent. The fund alluded to is that of secularized monastic and ecclesiastic lands. Whatever contests may have existed respecting the secularization of these lands, it is not my office to take part in such contests. It will be conceded on all hands, that the original donations were intended for pious uses. The national council of France has adjudged the secularization of the lands to be expedient; in conformity to a similar example in our own country two centuries ago. But without seeking
justification

justification by example, I can more than defend the transferred application of private eleemosynary donations, to the universal charity of national conciliations, in mental peace. The proposed application of secularized lands to the abatement of the miseries of civil war, is not only conformable to the substantial intent of the donations, but in the highest degree consentaneous to every heartfelt principle of justice and benevolence.

The eyes of all mankind are now turned upon France, to contemplate the final extrication of all the tragic scenes of civil war. The inauguration of the principle of mental peace is already recorded in the diplomatic code of nations. It now remains with France—that nation which has abjured ambitious conquest in foreign wars—to unite the two codes, and to transmit to posterity the advised example of binding up the wounds of civil war, in conciliation and mental peace.

FINIS.